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**BURUNDI**

## SNAPSHOT

# “We thought a normal man behaves that way:” Transforming Gender Norms to Prevent Sexual Violence and HIV in Burundi

### Men as partners in preventing sexual violence and HIV



Through USAID support, RESPOND held MAP® workshops at tea plantations and mines for men confront harmful gender stereotypes in Kabare Town, Burundi.

*“Lots of violent people are violent by ignorance and tradition. When you tell them this tradition is no longer valid, and that it hurts the well-being of their families, they change. Before, we often threatened our wives because we didn’t know it was bad. We thought a normal man behaves that way.”*

—Manweri, mine worker and participant in MAP® training

Manweri, age 46, works at a mine in Kabare Town, Burundi, where he leads a team of 1,500 miners who dig for coltan, a metallic ore used in electronic products. Manweri has a wife and six children between the ages of 1 and 19. He had never received any type of training or education on sexual and reproductive health until January 2013, when he and 24 other male miners participated in a Men As Partners® (MAP) workshop held by the RESPOND Project.

With funding from the U.S. President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR), EngenderHealth aims to address sexual violence in Burundi through the RESPOND Project. Over the course of a four-day MAP® workshop, men confront harmful gender stereotypes, discuss the concept of sexual consent, and practice healthy communication in relationships through role plays, case studies, and other participatory activities. A total of 488 men who work at mines and tea plantations participated in the workshops in 2013. Their employers paid their wages while they attended, recognizing the value of the workshops in reducing HIV transmission.

In the MAP® workshop, Manweri said he learned “how to have dialogue and live in peace in the family. Now we make joint decisions.... Before, if my wife said no, I’d take her by force. Like many, I’d say, ‘That’s what she’s there for.’ Now, we agree before having sex. I ask for her consent. If she’s not interested that day, I control myself.” He reported, “Communication with my wife has significantly improved.”

Manweri shares what he learned with others. At the mine, groups of around 100 miners frequently wait together for small teams to strike coltan. During this downtime, Manweri raises awareness of the harmful effects of sexual violence using role plays and other exercises from the workshop. He tells them, “When you abuse alcohol, you become violent.” In addition, Manweri goes door-to-door to tell couples what he learned in

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<http://www.usaid.gov/results-data/success-stories>

the MAP workshop. As of September 2013, he had spoken with 31 couples in his community about sexual violence.

In the next year, RESPOND will continue to engage men and women, health providers, social workers, and community leaders in preventing and responding to sexual violence.

USAID through RESPOND provides technical assistance to: (1) strengthen the health sector response for sexual violence (SV) survivors, (2) promote gender-equitable norms in the community to prevent SV and support survivors, and (3) strengthen local capacity to link SV survivors with services.

<sup>1</sup> Due to the sensitive nature of sexual violence, all names have been changed.